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CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS--SIGNIFICANCE AND UTILITY.

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TRUSTEES OF FOUR APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS DETERMINED THE RELATIVE VALUE OF SIGNIFICANT CAREER-DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS FROM A PRE-SELECTED LIST. COMPARISONS AMONG THE TRUSTEE GROUPS ARE MADE, COMPOSITE DATA ARE REPORTED, SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE RANK-ORDERED CONCEPTS IN RESEARCH AS AN EXTERNAL CRITERION ARE PROVIDED, AND IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING THE CONCEPTS AS TOPICS FOR GROUP GUIDANCE CLASSES ARE GIVEN. (AUTHOR)

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Abstract

Trustees of four appropriate professional associations determined the relative value of significant career-development concepts from a pre-selected list. Comparisons among the Trustee groups are made, composite data are reported, suggestions for using the rank-ordered concepts in research as an external criterion are provided, and ideas for incorporating the concepts as topics for group guidance classes are given.

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS:
SIGNIFICANCE AND UTILITY

After scanning the journals, observing convention program content, and participating in national career-development seminars, counseling professionals must be impressed that the rumors of the death of vocational guidance were premature. Our current resurrection efforts, however, do appear fanatical. ("Fanatic: one who, having lost sight of his goals, redoubles his efforts.")

What are the basic goals within the vocational aspects of guidance? If they are conceptual understandings, what concepts are of high importance? Can these important concepts be identified by categories of academic discipline and professional propensity? If conceptual understandings are central to career-decision making, should the acquisition of those understandings be the criterion for evaluating the degree of effectiveness of career-development efforts?

Tired criteria for "correct" occupational choices often have failed to produce relevant results as those criteria were related to pupil personnel programs designed to assist with career-decision making. Such criteria as money earned, persistency in career patterns, graduation from the program of initial entry, occupational entry at the mean of the measured traits of those already in the occupation, and measures of job satisfaction are all post-dictive and convenience criteria which are not highly functional for individuals progressing toward job-entry and toward gaining self- and environmental-

awareness. Such criteria, moreover, offer little help to the practicing school counselor as he develops programs of guidance services.

The purpose of this study was to identify essential career-development concepts. Such concepts can form the ~~basis of~~ bases for direct instruction to adolescents, structure study leading toward self- and environmental-sensitivity, precede -- logically -- the press for "choice," and ~~form the basis for~~ provide an external criterion useful in assessing the degree to which groups move toward vocational sophistication. Until we have relevant criteria, of course, we cannot appraise counseling outcomes.

METHOD

Two hundred and forty concepts relat~~ing~~ed to career-development understandings were gathered from ~~national~~ professional journals, monographs, and books. This initial group of statements was ~~then~~ reduced to 80 based upon considerations of reducing the number of equal-content statements and of the relative importance of the statements by a group of 20 local judges (counselors and personnel workers with at least masters degree equivalent academic preparation and more than one year's experience as a counselor in school or adult settings). The 80 concepts were ~~then~~ sorted into ~~the~~ four categories~~:of:~~ psychological -- self-reference --(P), sociological -- social reference --(S), economical -- material-reward reference --(E), and general --(G) by the same group of judges. The G category was created for statements that contained combined elements of P, S, or E; that is, a statement that was not directly within just one of the

classical categories of career theory. The ten statements per category with the highest category-reliability (P,S,E,G) were selected to compose the set of 40 concepts used in the next step. All of the concepts to be used had 85 per cent or higher concurrence in category assignment.

The next step involved the expert-judge method. These experts were selected by definition: professionals who have been elected by co-professionals to positions of trust within relevant professional organizations. To be elected, one must have national visibility and reputation. To be nominated, additionally, one must have a record of professional productivity and leadership. Such Trustees (Directors, Governors, etc.) are the leaders in guiding the affairs of their associations and in personifying the interests and values of the general membership.

The professional associations selected were the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA), the National Employment Counselors Association (NECA), the American School Counselors Association (ASCA), and the American Vocational Association (AVA). All Trustees were considered equal, although they do represent unequal numbers of co-professionals.

The 40 retained items (10 per category) were individually placed on 3 x 5 cards (multilith), and placed into a common random order for all sets or packets. The directions followed by the judges stated:

Instructions to Judges

> This set of 40 statements relates to work in some of its components. Rank these statements as they coincide with your professional judgment as to

their relative significance for occupational-choice understandings.

1. Sort the statements into halves (top and bottom in the direction of your attachment to the statements).

2. Then sort each of the halves into a top and a bottom division. You now have four groupings of 10 statements each; the groups are in order of significance.

The top quarter (the top half of the first sorting) should be bound with a rubber band and identified with card "I." The next, or second quarter (the bottom half of the first sorting) will be identified with card "II," etc. After sorting these statements into the groupings, insert the four sets into the pre-addressed envelope for their return.

The day prior to the arrival of the card-packet, the judges received a personal letter from the author that identified him as being a member of their association, and stating the reasons why they were selected as expert judges for this task. A follow-up letter (and second packet-set) was sent to the non-responders about 25 days later. A 93 per cent response was obtained, with the distribution of responses (six per association) happening to be distributed equally among the four sets of Trustees.

INTERPRETED RESULTS

Table I reports the composite rank-order values of the concepts as those statements were evaluated by the expert-judges. A value of one was assigned to concepts located within the top quarter, two for the next quarter, and so forth. The composite possible range of point-values per concept for the 24 judges, therefore, was 24 to 96. The item, "We all have widely different make-ups; endowments of traits, of ability of disability, of attitudes and aspirations, of social compatibility" is to be

understood as follows: a) this item is ranked 1 out of 40 items in terms of degree of relative importance; b) the category of the statement is general (G); c) this concept garnered 30 value points from the 24 judges; d) the mean value (points divided by 24) is 1.25; e) the judges' consistency in evaluating this item placed it 2 out of the 40 concepts; that is, this item obtained very high agreement among the judges in its quarter-section location (deviations computed). Generally, the higher the item is on the consistency scale, the greater is its contribution toward high coefficients of correlation found reported in Table III; f) the asterisk symbol (*) identifies this item as being one of the concepts recommended to be retained if an ordinal scale of 28 items (7 per category) is desired as an external criterion for vocational guidance evaluation; the number symbol (#) identifies this item as one to be retained if a scale is desired with interval-scale properties (nearly equal-appearing intervals based on value-means).[1]

(Insert Table I)

Table II is provided to illustrate the within-category (P,S,E,G) mean-value differences among the Trustee-groups of the four associations. The reader is cautioned that this table is meaningful only in a horizontal reading, because no planned effort was made to artificially equate the four categories each to the others. These means were determined by

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[1]For a discussion of ordinal- and interval-scale concepts, see S. S. Stevens (ed.), Handbook of Experimental Psychology. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1951, pp. 25-28.

adding the values of the items within each category as determined by each set of judges, and dividing this total by six, the number of judges from each association. The possible range of means would have been from 1.00 (highest value) to 4.00 (lowest value); that is, if the six Trustees from the NVGA had placed all of the ten psychological concepts within the top quarter in their decisions, the P mean category-value would have been 1.00. Theoretically, if all of the Trustees randomly sorted all of the items, each of the mean figures in Table II would be 2.500.

Agreement within categories among the Trustee groups appears greatest within the S items, and least within the P items. *Because these data are the parameters, no inferential* statistical test is appropriate. The greatest range of Trustee value-mean difference within each category is observed to be: a) P, .500, between ASCA and AVA; b) G, .350, between NVGA and ASCA; c) S, .167, between ASCA and NECA; d) E, .467, between NVGA and AVA. From these indications, the American Personnel and Guidance Association groups (NECA, NVGA, ASCA) would desire that the AVA Trustees become more psychologically attuned, while the AVA Trustees would wish for more economical awareness from the APGA groups.

(Insert Table II)

Table III is interpreted as identifying high relationships among the Trustee groups; these relationships are particularly high considering the homogeneous nature of the items

involved in the rankings. The highest correspondence is found between NECA and NVGA (.86), while the lowest is between ASCA and AVA (.59). When the APGA Divisions are combined into one composite ordering, that ranking concurs with the AVA ranking at the .76 level.

Although these relationships indicate high professional congruity and allow for fruitful inter-professional communication, there remains the observation that AVA is least in phase with the other three groups, while NECA and NVGA appear to be exceptionally congruent.

(Insert Table III)

RELATED FINDINGS

All judges received the packets with the concepts presented in the same random order. There was no relationship (rho = .11) between presentation order of the items and the judges' values attached to the items.

Computing the characters (letters) involved in each item and then ordering the items from the shortest to the longest, ~~was related~~ was related that ranking to the composite value-ranking. There was a very slight tendency for the longer statements to be ~~ranked~~ judged higher in value (rho = -.23).

UTILITY OF THE FINDINGS: RESEARCH

To develop an external criterion for vocational guidance services, one could have a group of students sort the concept-statements in a method similar to that used by the expert-judges in this study. Then varieties of guidance services

could be provided to experimental and control groups. After the differential experiences, a re-sorting of the concepts would be conducted. The degree to which the different groups progressed toward the ordering of the professional experts would be the criterion upon which the effectiveness of the vocational guidance experiences could be assessed.

One could use all of the 40 concepts as listed in Table I. To construct a scale from a smaller number of concepts, one could ~~construct~~ develop one consisting of the 28 more reliable items (7 per category), those marked (*) in column 5 of Table I. By thus eliminating the 12 items (3 per category) with the least consistency-value, one would ~~still~~ retain a sufficient quantity of concepts that sorting them into fourths -- with directions similar to those given the expert-judges -- would still be a meaningful technique. Should one wish to approach a study with intentions of using interval-scale statistical techniques for use with standardized tests yielding standard scores, the items identified (#) in column 5 of Table I would approximate equal-appearing intervals and involve a scale of 15 items. It would seem that adolescents and adults could make distributional judgments among the 15 concepts, but would be hard pressed to do so with 28 or 40. Or course, new item values would result by such re-structuring. These data were derived by ordinal-scale methods; using the (*) items does less violence to the process than ~~by~~ using the (#) items.

UTILITY OF THE FINDINGS: INSTRUCTION

The creative group guidance leader can take these concepts

to form the basis for direct instruction designed to illustrate and explicate the understandings. Just as study questions should be located at the beginning of the text chapter rather than at the end, concepts to be learned can be directly exposed while supporting data for the goal-generalizations are being discovered and explored. An example would be: take value-item 1 from Table I; the whole instructional goal of making youngsters aware of individual differences, and the categories of measureable and less-measureable traits, can be developed using the concept, "We all have widely different..." as a goal of conceptual understanding that is highly important for career-development planning. Each of these statements can be the springboard for units of instruction for the pupils, in-service education for the faculty, and form a structure and rationale for the priority of topics to be included in group guidance (possibly group counseling) procedures.

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Sources from which these 40 concepts were discovered will be supplied on request to the author.

TABLE I

RANK ORDER VALUES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS AS RATED BY THE TRUSTEES OF NVGA, NECA, ASCA, AND AVA

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (±24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Development Retention Recommendation
We all have widely different make-ups; endowments of traits, of ability or disability, of attitudes and aspirations, of social compatibility.	1	G	30	1.250	2	* #
The degree of satisfaction an individual obtains from his life work is proportionate to the degree to which it enables him to implement his self-concept and to satisfy his outstanding needs.	2	P	31	1.292	3	*
Occupations differ in their attraction value for persons with differing personality patterns and needs.	3	P	36	1.500	9	* #
The satisfaction in one's work and on one's job depends on the extent to which the work, the job, and the way of life that goes with them, enables one to play the kind of role that one wants to play.	4	P	37	1.542	5	*
An individuals' occupation affects his community and family life, dictates his residential mobility, type and amount of leisure-time activities, and to some extent the qualities of prestige and esteem.	5	G	40	1.667	14.5	*
Self-fulfillment may come through a harmonious and rewarding work experience.	6.5	P	42	1.750	18.5	*

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (÷24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Developnent Retention Recommendation
To work with a congenial group, to be an intrinsic part of the functioning of the group, to be needed and welcomed by the group, are important aspects of the satisfactory job.	6.5	S	42	1.750	12	* #
The success or failure of the worker depends not alone on his job performance but on how he plays his role in the work group.	8.5	S	46	1.917	24	
Three groups of job elements are important to job satisfaction: the social and technical environment, recognition and advancement, and the intrinsic work aspects of the job.	8.5	G	46	1.917	30	
No particular motive should be the basis for selecting a career plan.	10	G	48	2.000	16	* #
Childhood experiences are of enormous significance in developing our motivation to work and our capacity for work.	11	P	49	2.042	33	*
Occupational experience is an essential part of an individuals' orientation to and induction into his culture.	12	S	50	2.083	14.5	*
The major motivation to work for a majority is to achieve or maintain a standard of living which they consider appropriate to themselves.	13.5	E	52	2.167	29	
Work is a method of relating with and becoming identified with a group.	13.5	S	52	2.167	8	* #

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (÷24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Development Retention Recommendation
The social, individual, and economic determinants of choice may be disparate events, operating in their own way to affect the vocational choice of the individual.	15	G	53	2.208	36.5	
The process of choosing an occupation is a process of establishing identity.	16	P	54	2.250	38	
Work is a social act around which each of us organizes much of his daily waking experience and establishes a meaningful and rewarding life routine.	17	S	56	2.333	34	#
Occupational rankings are associated with the degrees of duties, prerequisites, rewards, and prestige.	18	G	59	2.458	18.5	*
Work is a means of acquiring social status and prestige.	20	S	60	2.500	20	* #
In the unskilled, semi-skilled, and even skilled and white collar worker, the fear of being laid off, of having to seek another job, of having to move in order to find work, makes the need for security appear to be one of the dominant needs and one of the principle reasons for working.	20	E	60	2.500	35	*
It is not so much what is done that is valued by the worker as the conditions in which it is done and what accrues from doing it.	20	G	60	2.500	32	

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (÷24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Development Retention Recommendation
While it is true that many workers change jobs with some frequency and relish in boom times, the need for security still shows through in their discussion of what they want to get from a job.	22	E	61	2.542	26	*
Work gives us personal satisfaction in the achievement itself.	24	P	63	2.625	39	
The work a man does tells more about him that is significant in this culture than any other single item of information.	24	G	63	2.625	26	* #
The ratio of supply and demand at the time and place in which a person is seeking to enter or to make success of an occupation, and related economic factors which affect supply and demand, will open or close the doors of opportunity and thus affect vocational adjustment.	24	E	63	2.625	26	
A sense of life goals must be achieved before occupational goal selection becomes truly meaningful.	26	P	64	2.667	40	
Work is a way of winning economic independence.	27	E	67	2.792	36.5	#
Non-employed activity (leisure) will become as personally satisfying and as socially respected as work has been in the past.	28.5	G	69	2.875	23	*
Work is a means of developing satisfying social relationships.	28.5	S	69	2.875	31	

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (÷24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Development Retention Recommendation
A most constructive help for youth is that concerned with an understanding of the nation's economic structure, the factors which influence changes in that structure, the relation of those changes to job prospects in different fields, and how one might exercise his civic responsibility to influence economic developments.	30	E	71	2.958	13	* #
Work organizations are human organizations.	31	S	73	3.042	22	*
There is a marked decline in the dignity and the personal significance of the kind of work called for in many occupations.	32	G	75	3.125	28	* #
High pay is associated with occupations with power to command high pay. Such powers come from a natural or artificial scarcity of workers, an emergency character of provided services, and the position of being able to charge directly per service given.	33	E	76	3.167	21	*
The failure to work or to work well may represent one way of expressing defiance.	34	P	77	3.208	11	*
Most of us spend our lives serving and in the service of others. We are accountable to them.	35.5	S	80	3.333	7	* #
The demands of our labor market are such that not everyone has the privilege of choosing a vocation.	35.5	E	80	3.333	17	*

Statement	Value Rank Order/40	Item Category	Value Points (24-96)	Value Means (÷24)	Raters' Consistency Rank Order/40	Scale Development Retention Recommendation
The only hope for man to be fulfilled in a world of work is that he get along with his fellow man.	37	S	82	3.417	10	*
Job satisfaction studies frequently place economic security first.	38	E	84	3.500	6	* #
Slowly but surely the number of occupations which provide much personal satisfaction is decreasing.	39	P	88	3.667	4	* #
Proper information regarding wages, if sufficiently impressed upon people, will lead to correct choice of occupation and correct number, provided barriers to occupations have been removed.	40	E	95	3.958	1	* #

TABLE II

MEAN VALUE OF CATEGORY BY

AFFILIATION OF JUDGES

Category	Composite (÷24)	NVGA (÷6)	NECA (÷6)	ASCA (÷6)	AVA (÷6)
Psychological	2.254	2.200	2.317	2.000	2.500
General	2.263	2.117	2.216	2.467	2.250
Sociological	2.542	2.517	2.634	2.467	2.550
Economical	2.942	3.167	2.833	3.067	2.700

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TABLE III

CORRELATION (rho) MATRIX OF THE CONCEPTS AS RANKED

SEPARATELY BY EACH OF THE TRUSTEE GROUPS

		NECA	NVGA	ASCA	AVA
I	NECA	--	.86	.80	.79
II	NVGA		--	.78	.71
III	ASCA			--	.59
	Groups I, II, III Combined				.76